

Opening Statement and Parliamentary Directives of the

Honorable Maxine Waters, D-35th CA

Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity

*Hearing on “H.R. 6078, the Green Resources for Energy Efficient
Neighborhoods Act of 2008”*

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

2128 Rayburn House Office Building

10 a.m.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As we all know, the nation is in the middle of an energy crisis. Gas prices have hit a record high of \$4.052 per gallon. As the nation heads into the summer months of high energy consumption, it is clear that energy efficiency is going to be the watchword moving forward.

This Congress has already taken significant steps on energy policy, including the enactment of H.R. 6, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. However, H.R. 6078 has the potential to build upon previous legislative efforts

undertaken by this Congress. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his work and dedication on the legislation before us today.

H.R. 6078 would amend the charters of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac by setting new goals for them regarding the purchase of energy efficient mortgages (EEMs) and location efficient mortgages (LEMs). I am pleased that the regulator for Fannie and Freddie, the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight will be testifying today. I am especially interested in their views on how these new “green” mortgage goals will interact with Fannie and Freddie’s current affordable housing goals.

The bill would also authorize a demonstration program involving 50,000 units in the Section 8 program. Last year when this Committee considered legislation to reauthorize the HOPE VI program for public housing, there was concern about the costs of going green in public housing. To address those concerns, that bill authorized the HOPE VI program at \$800 million. But green building principles should be included in our existing affordable housing developments as well.

Research has shown that low-income families pay more of their rent toward utilities than higher income families. As a result, increases energy costs have a disproportionate impact on low-income households. By incorporating energy

conservation and efficiency standards into our existing affordable housing stock, low-income families will benefit from the resulting cost savings. The demonstration program envisioned by this bill would provide the Congress and HUD with data on the costs of retrofitting a small portion of its housing stock, while allowing some low-income families to benefit from the resulting decrease in utility costs.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on these and other aspects of the legislation before us today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.